

# If Hoover Could Advertise Like Roosevelt!

By HAROLD T. CHASE

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**I**N TIMES past we have all frequently heard it deplored that a "business man" is not offered for President. And occasionally a candidate answering, or purporting to answer, that description has offered, but has not been nominated. The "business man's candidate," indeed, has been somewhat of a droll conception to the politicians, who, when all is said, know their business. There was such a candidate four years ago whose "literature" penetrated to hundreds or possibly thousands of editorial offices and must have represented the expenditure of considerable money, yet before the convention assembled he was forgotten. No banners floated over headquarters bearing his magnetic name. Not a delegate had gone for him.

There are several reasons for the futility of the much discussed "business man" candidacy, one of which is because the business man ordinarily is nothing more; that is, he is in fact a private man, engaged wholly in private affairs; and another is because the public does not know the business man who is mentioned, there is nothing in or about him that exercises a thrill or an appeal; and a third is because often he is suspected of obscure relations with the bogy of Big Business. For these and other reasons no "business man's candidate" has obtained a foothold in a presidential canvass, and it is perhaps true in consequence that the business community has abandoned hope or idea of living to witness the miracle of the nomination of a distinctive business man for President of the United States.

And it may be that ordinarily it has not been desirable that distinctively a business man should be chosen President. It has not always occurred that industrial or economic questions were dominant political questions, and when they were, as they have manifestly more and more come to be with the development of industrial society, it has not always occurred that they were approached by the country from the point of view that would logically suggest a typical business man for leadership in attacking such problems. So it may be logical enough that the slogan of a "business man for President" has never exerted the popular appeal that would launch such a candidacy auspiciously.

But however all that may be, the economic disturbance, the devastation, the losses and wastes, the overshadowing debt, the widespread and acute industrial unrest which characterize this present time make it unmistakably the time when business leadership is called for. The world has to be reconstructed and underwritten, largely through American agencies. The time has manifestly come when America needs a constructive business man for President, a man of trained business faculties, a man of broad business experience, a man acquainted with the larger business conceptions of international economic relations, a man of tried and tested business wisdom and balance and imagination, proof against hysteria and sensationalism.

It would clearly appear to be such a time—if by the favor of the gods such a man were available. Now, if we turn from the question as to the sort of candidate that the times demand, to the question what sort of candidates have been placed on view, what do we find?

Inquiry of politicians, and of persons who profess a proud ignorance of "politics," of employers and workmen, merchants and bankers, traveling men and professional men, reveals one outstanding political fig-

ure in this presidential year. It is not the figure of any of the announced candidates, but the rather rotund, rather amiable-looking, altogether unobtrusive figure of Herbert Hoover.

Others might name another pre-eminent faculty of Hoover, but in a political sense I think his first quality is unobtrusiveness. Conceive for a moment how he could have dominated this presidential canvass, if he had any faculty of obtruding.

Conceive, for the sake of illustration, the late Theodore Roosevelt occupying and filling the office of Food Administrator of crucified Belgium, in those days which burned themselves into history when the thought of Belgium swallowed up all other thoughts as the lean kine of Pharaoh extinguished the fat kine. Conceive of Colonel Roosevelt filling this office with the same skill and capability and success as Hoover.

Then conceive Colonel Roosevelt promoted to the functions of Food Administrator at Washington, the new Joseph, having arbitrary command of the world's granary, to whom all the nations came up for food, even as the sons of Jacob in the famine time of Canaan and Egypt. Imagine Colonel Roosevelt filling this job calmly, efficiently, to the admiration of his fellow citizens, the only Food Administrator of any of the beleaguered nations who lasted through.

Imagine Colonel Roosevelt in this focal position of the world in that critical time, and doing his work well; so well that when war ended we see him placed by the treaty Powers at Versailles in sole command of the distribution of food throughout stricken Europe, and become by common assent the world's economic autocrat.

And incidentally, in the course of his going about, conducting an economic survey, there is a coup d'état suddenly at Budapest—the return of the overturned and discredited Hungarian dynasty, and Versailles looking on dumbly, doing nothing, receives the command from its economic dictator to repudiate this dangerous restoration, and instantly does repudiate it, so that the attempt collapses!

Conceive of Colonel Roosevelt doing these things, filling the world's eye not by dint of any gift for publicity, but by sheer, raw ability in administration and economic knowledge.

And then try to conceive of his not being a candidate for President, not being clamored for for President, not having any presidential propaganda, organization or massed and compact following to engineer his candidacy.

The thing is inconceivable and unimaginable, but it suggests what I meant to convey by mention of the trait of Herbert Hoover of not being obtrusive.

**I**S A business man never a politician? Can a man not a politician be elected President?

If Hoover possessed political instincts, as distinct from political capabilities, he would long ago have enthused the country with well timed messages. He would have made public addresses and in these deliverances would have incorporated remarks to stir the political pulse, instead of delivering plain, business-like, common sense, economic judgments appealing to the best opinion of the world. No man in history, it may be said "without fear of successful contradiction," in the familiar old political phrase, has possessed an opportunity in a political way to advance himself as has Herbert Hoover. One is tempted to say that



HERBERT HOOVER

Suggested by a well-known Western editor as a Business Man's Candidate.

with a title of it Mr. Roosevelt could have become what George Washington once declared profanely, according to the testimony of his Secretary of State, he would not take it if it were offered to him—Emperor of the World.

And contrariwise, with a title of Colonel Roosevelt's political faculty Mr. Hoover today would be the conceded nominee of the Republican party for President. The party would have come to him en masse, the politicians of every faction, element and shade. As they say in politics, "it would be all over but the shouting." Nobody could hope to contest the nomination. It would be a choice by acclamation.

And yet, notwithstanding that Hoover is not a candidate, has no organized following, and not a politician so much as whispers his name in public—perhaps being a little apprehensive of doing so—in the common human discussions that are going on among the people, he dominates the situation. His name in Pullman cars, in clubs, at conferences of business men, in the homes of the American people, is mentioned oftener than any other, perhaps than all others together. If Hoover is a candidate in any sense he is the candidate of unorganized people. Not a politician favors him.

Hoover is a Republican, of progressive leanings, was for many years a member of a Republican club in New York City, has never, it is said, voted for a Democrat for President, yet is frequently spoken of as a likely Democratic nominee next summer.

Is it impossible for the unorganized people to bring about his nomination in his own party?

And the business community that has deplored the absence of distinctively "business" men from among the Presidents, what is the matter with business in such a situation? Has it gone to sleep? Does it, after all, care nothing for a business man for President? Has it despaired of such a consummation? Since it is obvious that the politicians will not "get behind" such a candidate, why is it that we have not seen an attempt in business to organize a Hoover movement? Is the business community indifferent to what appears to be its one opportunity to launch a business man for President, or has its genius for organized effort suddenly atrophied, that it has not held a meeting, appointed a committee, or as much as lifted a telephone receiver, to "draft" Hoover for President?

The opportunity faces it, since the situation has come about which the business community has deplored of ever realizing, a business man who is known to the public, who has no secret ties with Big Business in the politically objectionable sense, who is more, and greatly more, than a business man engrossed in private affairs, a business man who in fact dominates the common thought in considering the forthcoming presidential contest.



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GILBERT GROSVENOR

## To Head National Geographic Society

**M**R. GROSVENOR, for twenty years director of the National Geographic Society and editor of its magazine, has been made president of the society, the largest scientific educational body in the world. Under Mr. Grosvenor's management it has grown from a membership of 900 to 750,000 and has sent expeditions for scientific research to all quarters of the globe. Mr. Grosvenor is a son-in-law of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. His country home, "Wild Acres," in Maryland, has the densest and most varied bird population of any private estate in the country.